

Application No. 10/053,310
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Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-17. (cancelled)

18. (previously presented) A network server configured to facilitate communication among a plurality of endpoints, the server comprising:

- a network management system configured to automatically and dynamically coordinate cascading of two or more multipoint control units for expanding a number of endpoints in a multi-point conference;
- a gatekeeper configured to implement one or more network policies set by a network administrator, wherein the network policies include one or more items selected from the group consisting of: call authorization, call management, network bandwidth management; and
- a resource scheduler configured to perform one or more activities selected from the group consisting of: interacting with the calendars of others on the network, sending conference invitations to others on the network, updating participant calendars upon acceptance of an invitation, and communicating with the gatekeeper upon receiving a conference request from one of the endpoints.

19. (previously presented) The network server of claim 18 further comprising:

- a gateway operative to provide interface functionality between different network types.

20. (previously presented) The network server of claim 18 wherein the resource scheduler resides in the network management system.

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21. (previously presented) The network server of claim 18 wherein the resource scheduler resides in one or more of the plurality of endpoints.
22. (previously presented) The network server of claim 18 wherein the network policies implemented by the gatekeeper vary as a function of time of day or day of week.
- 23-31. (cancelled)
32. (previously presented) The method of claim 23 further comprising a method for dynamic cascading of multipoint control units, the method comprising:
- receiving notification that a conference call has been scheduled, wherein the notification includes one or more network management information parameters selected from the group consisting of: identity of participating endpoint devices, meeting time, identity of multipoint control units used, and required network bandwidth; and
 - determining from the network management information parameters whether dynamic cascading is required for resource optimization; and
 - if it is determined that dynamic cascading would benefit the optimization of network resources:
 - determining an optimum cascade configuration from a plurality of possible configurations based on one or more parameters selected from the group consisting of network scheduling information, network policy information, and network configuration information; and
 - directing participating devices and multipoint control units to dial into appropriate ports to optimize network resources.
33. (cancelled)

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34. (previously presented) A network server configured to facilitate communication among a plurality of endpoints, the server comprising:
- a gatekeeper configured to implement one or more network policies set by a network administrator, wherein the network policies include one or more items selected from the group consisting of: call authorization, call management, network bandwidth management; and
 - a resource scheduler configured to perform at least two activities selected from the group consisting of: interacting with the calendars of others on the network, sending conference invitations to others on the network, and updating participant calendars upon acceptance of an invitation.
35. (previously presented) The network server of claim 34 further comprising:
- a gateway operative to provide interface functionality between different network types.
36. (previously presented) The network server of claim 34 wherein the network policies implemented by the gatekeeper vary as a function of time of day or day of week.